

**EMINENCE INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS
PARENT VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK**



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Welcome from Dr. Buddy Berry, Superintendent

Dear Volunteers,

Thank you for your interest in helping our students, staff, families and schools.

Our district desires to create a cooperative community where students and educators strive for academic excellence within a safe, structured, and supportive environment. Eminence Schools values diversity, fosters responsible behavior, and teaches academic and social skills to empower students helping them realize their potential while becoming lifelong learners and **WORLD CLASS WARRIORS!**

We believe that all children should be loved and that every child can learn at high levels. Our commitment is evident in the number of partnerships we sustain, which includes our dedicated volunteers. We believe authentic partnerships are essential in order to deliver upon our vision. Thank you for engaging as a valued partner with Eminence Independent Schools.

We hope that your experience with our students, staff and families is a positive one. Please know that we are very appreciative of your time, patience and generosity.

Together we will strive to fulfill our vision of creating lifelong learners!

Sincerely,

Buddy Berry

The Eminence School On F.I.R.E

District's Vision / Mission / Core Values

Eminence Independent Schools desires to create a cooperative community where students and educators strive for academic excellence within a safe, structured, and supportive environment.

Eminence Schools purposes to value diversity, foster responsible behavior, and to teach the academic and social skills which will empower students to realize their potential while becoming lifelong learners and WORLD CLASS WARRIORS! Expect Eminence Excellence!

Core Values of Innovation of Eminence Independent Schools

1. Anytime, Anywhere Learning
2. Personalized Learning
3. Comprehensive Systems of Support
4. World Class Knowledge and Skills
5. Student Agency
6. Performance Based Assessment

INTRODUCTION and ORIENTATION

The administrative office where you are volunteering will help you gather the following logistical information to insure you are comfortable and knowledgeable about your surroundings.

Teacher/Supervisor: _____

○ phone number: _____

○ Email address: _____

School office hours: _____

Please read the information in this handbook and be sure to understand the policies and procedures of working with our students prior to starting your volunteering.

- I understand my roles and responsibilities as a volunteer.
- I understand the schools' rules for students and adults.
- I understand the schools' fire drills and safety procedures.
- I understand district policies regarding harassment, confidentiality, FERPA and affirmative action.

VOLUNTEER EXPECTATIONS

Thank you for your interest in volunteering with Eminence Independent Schools. We depend on volunteers and value their contributions. Your willingness to support the growth and development of our students is greatly appreciated. This handbook outlines the guidelines and expectations that volunteers must follow to create a safe learning experience for students, staff and volunteers.

Volunteers are expected to:

- Have completed the volunteer application and a background check
- Sign in and out of the office and always wear an ID badge while on school grounds
- Wear professional attire or abide by the school dress code
- Schedule to assist within a 24 hour notice
- Show respect for all students and staff
- Share concerns regarding students with **appropriate school staff only**
- Call the school if you are unable to attend a scheduled volunteer shift
- Secure all personal items (The school will not be responsible for personal items)

VOLUNTEER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

You are part of an education team.

Volunteers who are committed to helping students be successful are important members of the school team. Volunteers are essential to bringing the outside work to the school. Students need contact with individuals who can share experiences and bring other perspectives into the classroom. They need adults who can guide them through the learning process. Here are some suggestions to help maximize your time and benefit to students while volunteering.

Characteristics of Successful Volunteers

- Demonstrate patience, kindness and a genuine interest in each student.
- Find ways to establish a good rapport with students and teachers.
- Encourage and support student success.
- Accept each student and encourage the best for him/her.
- Are fair, consistent, trustworthy and honest in their approach, attitude and interactions with students.

Ground Rules for Schools District Facilities

- No tobacco items
- No weapons allowed
- No drugs or alcohol allowed
- Prescription drugs must be accompanied with a prescription and secured (Building administrator must be made aware of your need to carry such items)
- Do not use school equipment for personal purposes

IMPORTANT GUIDELINES

Safe interactions with Students

The school board expects that all staff and volunteers will strive to set the kind of example for students that will serve them well in their own conduct and behavior and contribute toward a supportive learning atmosphere.

All interactions with students should be professional and focused on teaching and learning. These guidelines protect both the student and volunteer.

As a volunteer you will:

- Meet in public spaces with students within the school setting Avoid situations where you are alone in a room with one student.
- Refrain from initiating social activities outside the school setting unless parent/guardian approved.
- Refrain from initiating any conversations or correspondence of a private or personal nature with students.
- Refrain from engaging in social networking with students via Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Vine, Twitter or other social networking websites without parent/guardian approval.
- Refrain from sharing your personal phone or email information without parent/guardian permission.
- Refrain from giving students gifts unless of nominal value or identical for all students in the class.
- Refrain from initiating students inappropriate signs of affection such as front hugs, students sitting on lap, touching or patting on areas other than shoulders, upper back, arms or hands or any other contact that causes a student to feel uncomfortable.
- **Maintain Student Confidentiality**
Volunteers are required by **federal law** to keep all student information that they obtain while working as a volunteer for the district confidential. Student information includes all academic, medical and personal information. In addition volunteers **cannot take photos** or share student work without parent/guardian written permission. Disclosure of student information by a volunteer is a violation of the **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA)** and may subject the volunteer and the district to civil liability.
- **Report Suspected Abuse or Neglect**
As a volunteer, if you suspect that a student may be the victim of abuse or neglect, you are required by law to report it immediately to the teachers, school principal or another school district employee.

WORKING WITH STUDENTS

Effective Communication with Students

Encouraging students with words and gestures can help them explore and understand. Let them know you hear, accept and respect what they have to say. Here are some tips to encourage student learning, encourage them to verbalize their learning and persevere through difficult or challenging problems and projects.

- A student's name is very important. Make sure you can say it correctly.
- LISTEN! Show that you're interested in them by listening to what they have to say.
- We all make mistakes. Assure students this is a part of the learning process.
- Build the student's self-confidence. Give them frequent honest feedback and encouragement.
- Be patient. Give students ample time to complete a problem or understand a new concept or idea.
- Be reliable. Students will be disappointed when you are absent.

It is important for students to learn problem solving skills in relation to their studies as well as real world application. Not giving them enough time to complete a problem or rushing to completion diminishes their own confidence as a learner. Here are some tips to support their learning and promote Questions of Inquiry

- Can you tell me more about that _____ (picture, project, story, homework assignment etc)?
- I see that _____.
- I don't understand. Could you give me an example?
- Is there another way to _____ (explain, read, solve)?

Positive statements greatly influence students' attitudes about themselves and their work. However, "nice job" provides limited encouragement and direction to students. Try to keep comments timely, specific, and descriptive, not evaluative. If the assignment requires further work, offer to assist with clear direction. Here are some comments for providing positive feedback and encouragement to students.

I can tell you worked really hard on that. Have you considered _____?

That's a great observation.

I like how focused you are on your work. Do you recall the assignment objective?

You are improving your calculations with each math problem completed.

Teaching kids to resolve conflicts builds confident and empowered youth

Conflict is inevitable among communities, including in schools. It's easy enough for adults to solve kids' conflicts. "Lena, I saw you take Josie's ball. Give it back and say you're sorry." This type of adult intervention doesn't empower students to solve their own conflicts. Conflict resolution is a learned skill; it takes practice. Adults can help youth develop this skill. Try these four conflict resolution techniques to build empowered, confident youth:

1. Rock Paper Scissors. Did the four square ball bounce in or out? Who was first in line? Who gets to use the red marker first? These types of conflicts occur countless times in elementary schools. Rather than let small conflicts escalate and take valuable time to solve, teach students to play a simple game of Rock Paper Scissors. Here's how to play:

Counting to three (or while saying "rock paper scissors"), two players bounce their fists in the air. On "three" or "scissors", players pick either rock, paper or scissors—as shown in the image. If both players choose the same object, they go again. Rock crushes scissors; scissors cut paper; paper covers rock. (Note: there is no physical contact necessary to play this game.)

2. I-Messages. Children are known to blame others when a problem arises, (i.e. "He did it!") Adults know that it often takes more than one person to start a conflict. Teaching children to recognize emotions, both in themselves and others, helps. Using an I-statement, such as "I feel sad when you don't play with me," allows children to identify their emotion instead of blaming others. Guide children through talking out their conflict with I-messages before discussing possible solutions. In time, children will become better at using I-statements without adult guidance.

3. Peace Path. Provide guided steps for students to take when resolving conflicts. The path may have statements to finish, such as "I feel... when..." and "I need...", or things for students to answer, such as "what happened?", "how would you feel?", and "brainstorm a solution."

List adapted from PlayWorks blog post: Four Conflict Resolutions for School Children by Beth Kimberly, October 21, 2011

Effective Communication with Teachers

Please be respectful of teacher's time when working in the classroom. It is best practice to meet the teacher or direct volunteer supervisor prior to starting your volunteer time. This meet and greet should include specific duties while volunteering, preferred communications systems and exchanging contact information. Do not be afraid to ask questions. If you have specific concerns or questions, ask the teacher when would be a good time to discuss. If it concerns the discipline of a student, don't hesitate to immediately ask for assistance. Be sure to contact the teacher if you cannot come at your scheduled time so alternate plans can be made.

SAFETY PROCEDURES

The district's safety program helps ensure that students, staff, visitors and volunteers are as safe as possible when in schools or in school related activities off campus.

Field Trips and Off- Campus Activities

It is the general policy of Eminence Independent Schools that all off-campus field trips and activity chaperones be at least 21 years of age.

Your safety

If you are injured while volunteering:

- Seek immediate first aid
- Report the incident to a staff member as soon as possible

You should know Eminence Independent Schools does not have specific insurance coverage for volunteers should you be injured while supporting student programs or activities. Please review your health care policy and/or homeowner's policy to determine that coverage is available if you are injured while volunteering.

Fire/earthquake drill

During your orientation please familiarize yourself with the emergency exits. If a fire or earthquake drill takes places during your volunteer time, please follow the teacher's directions to students to safely evacuate the building.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS FOR VOLUNTEERS

School employees and volunteers help ensure student safety. The safety net is stronger when everyone is familiar with and abides by the legal requirements. District policies and procedures are aligned with state and federal laws that protect students and adults.

All volunteers are required to read and understand the following policies and procedures as outlined in the online volunteer application prior to their first day of volunteering: **affirmative action, reporting child abuse and neglect, preventing sexual harassment, intimidation and bullying, non-discrimination, tobacco and drug free and network information.**

District policies and procedures are aligned with state and federal laws that protect students and adults.

Volunteer Dismissal and Reassignment

Volunteering is a privilege, not a right. If at any time you do not adhere to our policies, procedures and/or expectations outlined in this handbook, you may be dismissed or reassigned.

Please sign below

I have read the handbook and agree to adhere to the requirements.

Volunteers Name:(Print)

Volunteers (Signature)
